

2020 Prosperity Fund Investment Fund Highlights

Challenges Facing Rural Communities

- Economic and technological dislocation;
- Agricultural and resource-based industries under threat from national and international competition, and land development pressure;
- Aging populations;
- Inadequate access to quality health care;
- Lack of access to affordable, high-speed broadband services;
- Lack of decent paying job opportunities in outlying regions (and related local tax base ramifications);
- Rapid sprawl residential development in regions where rural residents can commute to jobs in metropolitan areas; and
- Deteriorating or inadequate physical infrastructure.



NCSL's Ten Principles for Rural Development

In 2002, the National Conference of State Legislatures issued a report with ten principles that state governments should follow in helping rural areas. Those principles include:

- Rural communities need to work together and act regionally to tackle many rural challenges;
- Ag and resource-based industries need to be well supported with economic development assistance and other targeted help;
- States should have a dedicated and adequately funded rural agency (such as the Rural Maryland Council); and
- States should consider the rural implications of policy issues, and rural areas should receive potentially disproportionate assistance in meeting their developmental and public service challenges.

The 2020 Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund will:

- Build on past efforts, while making important investments in the future;
- Help Maryland implement many of NCSL's ten principles;
- Provide a multi-year strategy to raise the standards of living in Rural Maryland, while preserving the best aspects of a pastoral heritage and rural way of life;
- Fund efforts that build local and regional capacity, leverage or augment available federal funding, and engender private investment in rural-serving projects and programs;
- Promote intergovernmental cooperation in rural regions as well as public/nonprofit collaboration on community projects and service delivery;
- Support entrepreneurial activity, help small or fledging businesses succeed, and develop regional infrastructure and workforce housing solutions.

Administration of the 2020 Rural Investment Fund

- The Rural Maryland Council will administer the Fund using the existing Maryland Agricultural Educational and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) infrastructure.
- All grantmaking decisions would be made by the interagency MAERDAF Grants Review Board, which has representatives from MDA, DBED, DHCD, DHMH and DNR.
- The authorization for the 2020 Rural Investment Fund will sunset in the Year 2020 when rural/metropolitan employment and service delivery disparities are expected to be reduced or eliminated and the rural quality of life significantly improved.

Rural Maryland Council ■ 50 Harry S Truman Parkway ■ Annapolis, MD 21401 ■
Phone: 410-841-5772 ■ www.rural.state.md.us